

THE MILITANT

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Cuban paper interviews Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Debate on UK vote highlights EU rivalries, workers anger

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON — Growing competition between capitalist countries world-wide is tearing at the fabric of the European Union. The EU is a protectionist trading bloc and would-be political union whose member countries have rival national ruling classes with dif-

‘VOTE LEAVE, OPPOSE UK IMPERIALISM’
— *Communist League, p. 7*

ferent and often opposing interests. Economic stagnation and sharpening competition, as well as the refugee crisis and its roots in the Middle East conflicts, are at the center of divisions within the EU today. A June 23 referendum on whether to continue the United Kingdom’s EU membership is marked by these tensions and by the growing discontent of millions of working people.

The “Remain” campaign, headed by the Conservative Party government, is supported by the dominant sections of the capitalist class for whom the economic benefits of EU membership appear overwhelming.

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Join SWP in campaigning for working-class program

Discuss what our class is capable of fighting for



Diana Newberry, left, discusses Socialist Workers Party and its program with Patty Gonzalez in Owatonna, Minnesota, May 29. Ballot efforts are also underway in Washington, Tennessee.

BY JOHN STUDER

SEATTLE — The Socialist Workers Party is campaigning for a revolutionary, working-class perspective across the country and to put the party’s ticket — Alyson Kennedy for U.S. president and Osborne Hart for vice-president — on the ballot, including in Washington, Minnesota and Tennessee.

Party campaigners are joining

union picket lines, defending government frame-up victims and discussing questions confronting working people — from whether coal should be used to provide electrification in Asia to the need for unionization and how workers can fight against unemployment and low wages.

They find serious receptivity among workers who are looking at presidential candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, and others who don’t support any candidate. The Socialist Workers Party presents what none of the capitalist candidates do — what the working class itself is capable of and must do to fight independently of the bosses and their political representatives.

The next two weeks will be a pe-
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Obama uses Asia trip to push alliances against China

BY SETH GALINSKY

Underneath hollow platitudes about wanting a “nuclear free world,” the aim of Barack Obama’s May 27 visit to Hiroshima, Japan, and to Vietnam earlier in the week, was to strengthen alliances Washington can use in its economic, political and military rivalry with Beijing.

Washington is especially wor-

DEMAND US GOV’T DESTROY ITS NUKES!
— *Editorial, page 9*

ried about the Chinese government’s growing naval power, which challenges U.S. imperialism’s domination of the Pacific, a spoil of the U.S. defeat of Japan in World War II.

In the last two years Beijing has been building on reefs, shoals and islets in the South China Sea — through which a third of world maritime traffic passes — to create airfields and in at least one instance, place surface-to-air missiles. At least three times in the past seven months, U.S. warships have deliberately sailed close to these man-made islands. Just a few days before Obama’s trip to Asia, two Chinese fighter jets flew within 50 feet of a U.S. Navy reconnaissance plane near the islands.

On the first day of Obama’s May 23-25 visit to Vietnam, he announced he was lifting a decades-long ban on U.S. arms sales to Hanoi. Limited military collaboration between the two governments began in 2003.

Obama attempted to rewrite history
Continued on page 4

Seven-week Verizon strike won solidarity, tentative deal is set



Strikers rally in Brooklyn April 14 on second day of walkout against telecommunications giant.

BY CANDACE WAGNER

After 48 days on the picket line, 39,000 strikers returned to work May 31 and June 1 after officials of the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers reached a tentative contract agreement with Verizon Communications Inc.

Verizon bosses were surprised by the widespread sympathy the strike won among working people, despite the bosses’ attempt to paint the strikers as greedy, labor aristocrats who should be happy with their “generous” wages and benefits.

Among the central issues were pro-
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Fear of world recession overshadows meeting of G-7 imperialist leaders

BY MARK THOMPSON

Fears of a new world recession overshadowed the annual meeting of Group of Seven leaders in Japan May 26-27. “The most worrisome risk is a contraction” with “the risk of the global economy falling into crisis,” Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a news conference after chairing the summit. But the heads of state couldn’t agree on the extent of the risk or how to respond.

The G-7 is comprised of the world’s foremost imperialist powers — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Together they account for around half of the world’s economic
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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minnesota nurses rally to defend their health care, work conditions

Montreal Old Port workers launch strike for CA\$15 an hour

‘Intercontinental Press’ now available online

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR

The weekly news magazine *Intercontinental Press* will be available online starting June 5. This sister publication to the *Militant* and the Marxist magazine *New International*, published from 1963 to 1986, provides first-hand reports, news and analysis, and documents from discussions and debates on revolutionary strategy and the forging of an international revolutionary leadership of the working class. Much of this material is not available anywhere else.

The issues covered and debated in *Intercontinental Press* go to the heart of questions facing workers and young people today: What road forward in face of the deepening social and economic crisis of capitalism? How do we organize a revolutionary leadership? What type of organization is needed? What should be the goals of the struggle?

Intercontinental Press publicized and built the massive protests against the U.S. war in Vietnam. It championed the struggles of miners in the United States and the United Kingdom, shipyard workers in Poland and gold miners in South Africa. Correspondents reported on workers’ struggles and national liberation movements from every continent.

Staff writers reported firsthand on the massive student and worker uprising in France in 1968, the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, and the popular insurrection that toppled the Shah of Iran in 1979, as well as the revolutionary government that came

to power in Burkina Faso in 1983.

Intercontinental Press campaigned to free class struggle fighters imprisoned from the United States to the Soviet Union, Ireland to Peru, Czechoslovakia to South Africa.

The magazine began as the weekly international labor press service *World Outlook* and was published in Paris as a joint effort by a staff of revolutionary leaders and journalists from several countries. It was launched in response to big world events — the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the Algerian Revolution in 1962 — and the beginning of the international youth radicalization in the 1960s.

The editorial office later moved to New York and in 1968 the name changed to *Intercontinental Press*. Socialist Workers Party leader Joseph

Framed Ukraine pilot Savchenko freed from Russian jail

BY MAGGIE TROWE

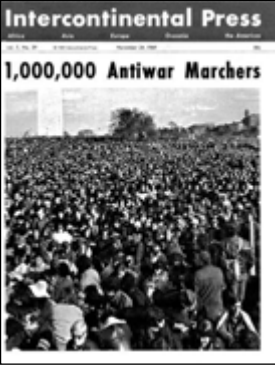
Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko was granted clemency by Russian President Vladimir Putin and released May 25 after nearly two years in a Russian prison. She returned to a hero’s welcome in Ukraine.

Savchenko, now 35, took part in the mass mobilizations in early 2014 that forced out the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich. After Moscow annexed Crimea and backed armed separatists who seized sections of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine, Savchenko joined the

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		Click here to download list of articles.doc	



Intercontinental Press, which published from 1963 to 1986, will be available online June 5. Much of the material in this weekly magazine is not available anywhere else. Above, sample subject index and covers.



Hansen was the editor of the magazine from 1963 until his death in 1979.

As of June 5, a complete index for all 24 years of *Intercontinental Press* will be up and running, with links to all the issues of the first 12 years,

1963–74. A team of volunteers is scanning the remaining years, which will be added in the coming months. To access it, follow the link on the home page at www.themilitant.com or www.pathfinderpress.com.

volunteer Aidar battalion to fight the separatists. She was captured June 17, 2014, and taken to Russia.

Savchenko denied Moscow’s shifting charges against her, including the claim that she was responsible for directing mortar fire that killed two Russian journalists. After a show trial earlier this year, she was sentenced to 22 years in prison.

She refused to cooperate with Russian authorities and carried out several hunger strikes protesting her conditions. Demonstrations demanding her freedom took place in Ukraine, Russia, across Europe and in U.S. cities March 6-9.

Savchenko was released in exchange for two Russian soldiers convicted in Ukraine for fighting with separatist forces. Moscow denied they had been on active duty in Ukraine, and they returned to Russia without fanfare.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, a capitalist billionaire whose regime has attacked the working class and restricted democratic rights, de-

monstratively welcomed Savchenko and basked in the glow of celebration of her release. His government has been in turmoil amid corruption scandals and a deepening economic crisis.

Ukraine’s economy shrank last year, a result of the worldwide economic contraction, the impact of the separatist war and Moscow’s seizure of Crimea. A “rescue plan” proffered by the International Monetary Fund, which represents Washington’s interests, demanded Kiev reduce social spending, raise taxes and privatize state-owned enterprises, cutting thousands of jobs.

While in prison, Savchenko was elected to parliament on the ticket of the Fatherland Party headed by Yulia Tymoshenko, a former prime minister and rival of Poroshenko. Savchenko took her distance from Tymoshenko’s effusive airport greeting.

Savchenko is widely discussed as a possible candidate for president. “Ukrainians, if you need me to be president, I’ll be president,” she told reporters in Kiev.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

THE MILITANT

Farmworkers strike for wages, union

At the height of the season, some 400 berry pickers struck for higher wages and better conditions. A few days later they voted in the United Farm Workers.

The ‘Militant’ covers the fights of agricultural workers for better conditions, safety and to unionize.



United Farm Workers
California berry pickers strike May 16-18; workers voted in UFW union May 21.

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Working-class program

Continued from front page
riod of concentrated campaigning for the party, leading up to a June 16-18 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio.

The Socialist Workers Party got a good response in Murfreesboro and Smyrna, Tennessee, where Nissan’s non-union assembly plant employs more than 8,000 workers.

“All the companies say we make too much, but it’s not easy for a single mother to support four kids on \$10.50 an hour,” Allyson Gainor, who works at a Nissan parts plant, told Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia, as she signed to put Kennedy and Hart on the ballot.

The number of nonunion auto plants has increased and the auto bosses have pressed concessions on workers in union-organized plants.

“The more working-class people can come together, get rid of divisions among us, the more we gain power,” Chris Daniels, an assembler at Hennessey Industries and member of United Auto Workers Local 2303, told SWP campaigner Joanne Murphy. “There’s a lot more of us than them.”

In the first two days of Tennessee campaigning 90 people signed petitions, out of the goal of 500, to put the party on the ballot, and nine subscribed to the *Militant*.

Party campaigners spoke with unionists and others on their doorsteps in Longview, Washington, May 28. Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers there have fought bitter battles against company lockouts and concession demands. Many homes display the unions’ signs.

Shelly Porter, a leader of Longshore Local 21’s fight against EGT Develop-

ment in 2011-12, hugged Mary Martin, the SWP’s candidate for governor of Washington, when she and this correspondent arrived at her house. “These are the people that write in their *Militant* newspaper about the issues and questions that are important to working people,” she told a friend she was preparing to go fishing with. “It’s the only paper I trust.”

One debate in Washington is over Millennium Bulk Terminals’ plan to set up a terminal in Longview to ship coal from Wyoming and Montana to Japan, South Korea and other parts of Asia. Hearings on the proposal attracted thousands of proponents and environmentalist opponents in Longview and Spokane over the last two weeks.

John Doyle had two signs at his house, one saying “stop coal” and another backing the Longshore union. “People need jobs here and times are tough, but I’m concerned the damage to the environment would be too great to let the terminal go through,” he said as he signed the petition.

“People in Asia, Africa and elsewhere need electrification, it’s a precondition for the development of literacy, culture and politics,” Martin said. “If that means coal right now, we should support it. And we should demand that it be processed cleanly and the workers themselves — from the coal mines to the power plants — should control safety and fight for anti-pollution controls on the job.”

“Miners themselves can lead the fight to transition to safer energy production, nuclear power and other methods as they become practical, as we all fight for jobs, union-scale wages and workers’ control over production,” she said.

“Well, I agree with you that people around the world need the energy,” Doyle said.

Martin and other SWP campaigners are headed to Spokane to support members of the International Association of Machinists on strike against Triumph Composite Systems since May 11.

More than 1,280 people have signed to get the SWP on the ballot in Washington, over the 1,000 required. Party supporters are going to get more than 1,600 to show the working-class support for the party.

David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Minnesota, campaigning in the largely Somali Cedar-Riverside community May 29, discussed the government’s frame-up prosecution in Minneapolis charging some youth with conspiring to join Islamic State.

Militant fund over the top!

Congratulations and thanks to all our contributors!

The Militant Fighting Fund has gone over the top, receiving contributions of \$113,173 — well over our goal of \$110,000.

The fund was raised as part of a seven-week effort by partisans of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues around the world that also won 1,686 new and renewing readers to the *Militant*, overwhelmingly by going door to door in working-class neighborhoods. And the party-building efforts continue (see above).

Keeping the *Militant*, the voice of the SWP, in print and affordable is made possible by your generous contributions. If you have not had a chance to contribute, it’s not too late. Send your check or money order payable to the Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, New York 10018.

— LEA SHERMAN

Socialist Workers Party files for ballot in New Jersey



Militant/Janet Post

TRENTON, New Jersey — Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the U.S., right, with attorney Lawrence Otter, center, and campaign supporter Richard Ariza, file petitions May 26 to put Hart and SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy on the ballot in New Jersey. At back, elections department staff count the 1,450 signatures, well above the state requirement of 800.

They were acquired as campaigners knocked on doors in cities up and down the state introducing workers to the Socialist Workers Party, the party’s paper the *Militant* — selling 140 subscriptions to it — and books and pamphlets containing the program of the SWP. Some additional signatures were collected at picket lines of workers on strike against Verizon in Trenton, Jersey City, Newark, Hamilton and Nutley.

“My campaign supporters took advantage of this opportunity over the past month to discuss with workers across New Jersey the economic and political crisis that we are living through. It grinds on, with no end in sight,” Hart told the *Militant* after the filing.

Jacob Perasso, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, and campaign supporters Janet Post and Cecilie Brown, who work together at a Philadelphia Walmart, also accompanied Hart in Trenton. “I feel that Alyson and Osborne are for the workers and for everything we need — and so we should support the campaign,” said Brown.

— NORTON SANDLER

“The FBI paid an informer to try and entrap them and then charged them with ‘conspiracy,’ not with *doing* anything illegal,” Rosenfeld said. “They have used similar charges to try and attack our party and other working-class and Black rights’ organizations.”

The party has signed up close to a thousand working people as it campaigns, toward a goal of 2,400 by June 12. Scores of workers have picked up copies of the *Militant*, more than 30 have gotten subscriptions and a number of Pathfinder titles.

Is Donald Trump a fascist?

SWP campaigners going door to door often run into Trump supporters, many of whom sign their petitions to get on the ballot and pick up a copy of the *Militant*, as do many Sanders supporters and workers who say they don’t like any of the candidates.

The liberal and conservative bosses’ press gives the impression that Trump and his supporters are reactionary and fascist-minded. A May 30 opinion piece in the *Washington Post* by columnist Richard Cohen was titled, “Trump has taught me to fear my fellow Americans.”

“Maybe the talking heads on TV would draw the line at some mild version of fascism, but would the American people do the same?” he wrote, talking about working people. “The easy yes of yesteryear has given way to awful doubt.”

The bosses don’t really fear Trump or think he’s

Adolph Hitler reincarnate. He’s a businessman like them, seeking to maximize profits, while trying to sell the idea to workers that “we” have the same interests to keep us from organizing independent of their parties. On many issues, from health care to U.S. military intervention abroad he’s to the left of Hillary Clinton.

But the employing class is afraid of the many workers who have attended his meetings, a reflection of the discontent, anger and disgust working people have for “politics as usual.”

This is the same crisis and looking for answers that provides opportunities for the Socialist Workers Party unprecedented in decades.

All the bourgeois candidates present themselves as the great hope to solve the crisis. The Socialist Workers Party explains the opposite: that workers in the U.S. have common interests with working people around the world and that working people are capable, if they see their self-worth, of wresting power out of the hands of the capitalist class and organizing a society based on human solidarity.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2016!

To sign up for campaigning teams, for information, or to make a contribution, contact SWP units listed below or:

SWP 2016 Campaign
227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(646) 922-8186

swp2016campaign@gmail.com

<i>Militant Fighting Fund</i>			
April 2- May 24 (Final)			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Atlanta	\$10,000	\$10,730	107%
Chicago	\$11,500	\$10,146	88%
Lincoln*	\$240	\$321	134%
Los Angeles	\$8,600	\$8,720	101%
Miami	\$3,000	\$3,270	109%
New York	\$21,000	\$21,622	103%
Oakland	\$14,500	\$14,777	102%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$3,473	109%
Seattle	\$7,500	\$7,525	100%
Twin Cities	\$3,500	\$3,915	112%
Washington	\$7,700	\$7,884	102%
U.S. Total	\$90,740	\$92,383	102%
CANADA			
Calgary	\$3,200	\$3,290	103%
Montreal	\$4,000	\$5,600	140%
Canada Total	\$7,200	\$8,890	123%
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,000	\$5,012	125%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$2,000	\$2,690	135%
Manchester	\$700	\$1,002	143%
U.K. Total	\$2,700	\$3,692	137%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,100	\$1,275	116%
FRANCE	\$450	\$621	138%
Other	\$1,200	\$1,300	
Total	\$107,390	\$113,173	103%
Should be	\$110,000	\$110,000	100%
*Raised goal			

Obama visit to Asia

Continued from front page
in his May 24 speech at the National Convention Center in Hanoi, making it sound as if the U.S. war in Vietnam was the result of a misunderstanding.

“Cold War rivalries and fears of communism pulled us into conflict,” Obama said, leaving 3 million Vietnamese dead, as well as 58,315 U.S. soldiers.

He didn’t mention that first Paris and then Washington sent hundreds of thousands of troops to crush the Vietnamese revolutionary fight for independence and a unified nation. Washington was finally forced to pull out in 1975 due to the resistance of Vietnamese freedom fighters, as well as millions of people who took to the streets in the United States and beyond demanding, “U.S. out now!”

Over the last 20 years, as Hanoi welcomed expanded capitalist investment, annual U.S.-Vietnam trade has grown from \$450 million to \$45 billion, just a little behind China.

The Vietnamese government cautiously sees increased military collaboration with Washington as a protection against the growing economic and military weight of Beijing, which borders Vietnam.

While the Vietnamese government has not forgotten the long war against U.S. imperialism, it has also faced military intervention by the Chinese government. After Vietnamese troops toppled the murderous Chinese-backed Pol Pot regime in Cambodia in 1979, they had to repel an invasion by Beijing in which some 10,000 Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed. In 1988 more than 60 Vietnamese sailors died during a clash with Chinese forces over control of part of the Spratly Islands.

As part of the informal agreement between Hanoi and Washington, Vietnam will likely be provided U.S. radars, sensors, surveillance planes, drones and refurbished U.S. Coast Guard patrol ships. The *New York Times* reports that the U.S. Navy expects to be given increased use of Vietnam’s Cam Ranh Bay, a recently modernized deep-sea port on the South China Sea.

Visit to Hiroshima

From Vietnam Obama flew to Japan for the Group of Seven summit. On May 27, he gave a speech in Hiroshima, the first time a sitting U.S. president has visited the city, which Washington wiped out with an atom bomb on Aug. 6, 1945.

“Death fell from the sky and the world was changed,” Obama said in the opening of his speech at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, referring to the first use of a nuclear weapon in war as if it was a natural disaster.

But the atom bomb did not just fall from the sky — it was a deliberate decision by President Harry Truman to destroy a mostly civilian city. As many as 80,000 people died instantly; the final death toll is estimated at more than 135,000.

And Obama said not a word about the second, more powerful bomb that the U.S. military dropped three days later on Nagasaki that killed between 50,000 and 73,000. More than 20,000 of those killed in the two cities were Korean laborers who had been forcibly conscripted by the Japanese military.

The goal is to “ultimately eliminate the existence of nuclear weapons,” Obama claimed. He made no mention

that his administration has begun a \$1 trillion “modernization” of the U.S. stockpile of some 4,500 nuclear weapons. According to the *New York Times*, the Obama administration has dismantled fewer nukes than any U.S. president since the end of the Cold War.

Obama’s speech in Hiroshima, with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at his side, also bolstered the militarization drive of Japanese imperialism.

Since coming to office in 2012 Abe has increased military spending to \$41.8 billion, Japan’s largest ever; lifted a decades-long ban on weapons exports; and passed laws that for the first time since World War II allow its military to undertake overseas combat missions.

While these moves have been welcomed by the Obama administration, they have increased unease in China, Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines, the targets of the brutal Japanese imperialist conquests and colonizations leading up to and during the second World War.

There are more U.S. troops based in Japan than anywhere else outside the United States: 39,000 on Okinawa and other U.S. bases and 14,000 on nearby ships.

Strikes in France protest labor ‘reform’ law

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — Labor strikes and protests are taking place in several key industries across France in response to government plans to push ahead with anti-union “reforms.” As of May 27, work stoppages were affecting production at the country’s eight oil refineries, while roadblocks by drivers and actions by rail and port workers have reduced the transport of goods.

The Socialist Party government claims its draft law will give bosses more “flexibility” and reduce unemployment. For years, workers here have faced high unemployment — currently over 10 percent — as well as increased use of “temporary” contracts that the bosses use to divide workers and push down wages and working conditions. The proposed revision to the labor code would allow companies to impose changes in working hours and overtime pay, lengthen the 35-hour workweek and secure local agreements inferior to

Mali workers in Paris help win release of jailed leader



Militant/Claude Bleton

BAGNOLET, France—Hundreds of workers from Mali held a sit-in outside the Malian consulate in this suburb of Paris May 6-11, to demand the release of Bakary Diambou, the spokesperson for the Association of the Circle of Yélimané Dagakané. Yélimané is a village in western Mali.

Diambou was imprisoned in Mali April 18 for “opposition to legitimate authority and inciting the population to non-payment of tax.” He was released on parole May 11 in response to protests there, in France and elsewhere. House arrest was also lifted for some 50 supporters of the group. The banner (above) reads, “No to injustice, no to insecurity, no to corruption.” Protesters said the association here helps raise medical and school supplies for Yélimané.

—CLAUDE BLETON AND DEREK JEFFERS

those set by industry-wide agreements that are supposed to apply to all workplaces, with or without a union presence.

The proposal sparked large protests this spring. As it became clear the bill was headed for defeat in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, President Francois Hollande decided May 10 to use a provision in the 1958 constitution to push it through without a vote.

In response, both the CGT and FO unions called for protest strikes. The leadership of the other major union, the CFDT, is supporting the government’s measures. Within days barricades set up by unionists, young people, truck drivers and others blocked access to oil storage depots. Workers struck at all eight oil refineries. The government said May 25 it was using supplies from its strategic reserves to restock gas stations that were running dry.

Port workers are blocking some of the largest ports, including Le Havre

and Marseille. Workers at all 19 of the country’s nuclear power plants began a partial strike May 26. Airport and airline worker unions have called for a strike, as have the public transportation unions in Paris.

A public survey by the IFOP polling company May 26 reported 60 percent support for the strikes.

A May 26 national day of protest against the labor bill drew tens of thousands in Paris and other cities.

Marc Kinzel in Marseille and Jean Vilaca in Paris contributed to this article.

in New International #12

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

“One of capitalism’s infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism’s accelerating drive toward war, it’s going to be a long, hot winter.”
— Jack Barnes

pathfinderpress.com



Active Workers Conference

Oberlin, Ohio, June 16-18

Classes

Puerto Rico Is a US Colony: SWP’s Communist Continuity in the Fight for Independence

The Coming Apart of Imperialism’s Post-“US-Lost-the-Cold-War” Order in the Middle East

Colonization, “Trade Union-ification,” and the Struggle for a Proletarian Party

“No Nukes!” — Our Call for US Nuclear Disarmament and Why Nuclear Weapons Weaken Proletarian Power

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM Manchester

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including unionists striking US Foods, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Minnesota nurses rally to defend their health care, work conditions

MINNEAPOLIS — More than 200 members of the Minnesota Nurses Association and supporters rallied outside the Allina Commons here May 18. The informational picket was organized to publicize the fight of 5,000 nurses at five Allina Health hospitals and facilities to defend their health benefits.

The nurses are currently covered under the union-sponsored insurance plan. "It is an excellent plan," MNA Executive Director Rose Roach told the *Militant*. "But now Allina wants to dump that and force everyone to take one of their plans."

"Everybody in the Twin Cities knows how bad the Allina plans are and how you get left with the large deductibles," added Amy Kieffer, a nurse at Allina's United Hospital in St. Paul.

Union president Mary Turner said other issues in contract talks include "nurses having a say in the care of the patients. Allina wants to be able to determine that only this many minutes can

be spent with a patient, as determined by a computer program."

— Jacquie Henderson

Food workers strike in England, say 'enough is enough' of cuts

SHEFFIELD, England — "Finally we said to the company, 'You are not going to treat us like dirt anymore, enough is enough,'" said Aaron Bonsell, 28, during a 48-hour strike by Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union members at Pennine Foods here May 19-20. It's the first strike since the site opened in 1986, added Andrew Harris, another striker.

About 900 people work at the plant, which produces ready meals for Marks and Spencer stores. "There were 500 union members before the strike, and 50 more joined up and came out on strike with us," said Carole Duncan while picketing May 20.

The factory is owned by 2 Sisters Food Group, which has launched a series of attacks on contract terms, including ending premium pay for weekend work and time-off days for working on



Militant/Bernie Senter

United Airlines flight attendants and supporters demonstrate in Los Angeles May 19 during day of actions at 14 airports worldwide. They are paid less than workers at American or Delta.

holidays and weekends.

Roughly 80 percent of the workers are now on 12-hour shifts. "They bullied us to sign the contracts," said Harris. "But I didn't. The company sent out a letter saying that those who don't sign the new contract by July 14 will be laid off." Workers on both "new" and "old" contract terms were on the picket line.

Union organizer Haroon Rashid said a delegation of workers from Gunstones Bakery in nearby Dronfield, also owned by 2 Sisters Food, visited the Pennine picket line. They had a strike last year.

Three further 48-hour strikes are planned, the next on June 5-6.

— Tony Hunt and Dag Tirsén

United Airlines flight attendants march for unified contract

LOS ANGELES — More than 300 United Airlines flight attendants and their supporters marched through the United terminal at Los Angeles International Airport May 19, part of a day of action at 14 airports worldwide.

After Continental Airlines, Continental Micronesia and United Airlines merged in 2010, the merged company kept the United name. The members of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA are negotiating to replace the three different contracts they have been working under with one unified agreement. "The proposals we're seeing continue to try pitting one group of flight attendants

against another instead of working to build a contract that includes all of us," states a May 1 update from the union negotiating committee.

"We want to maintain our health plan. They want to increase costs, deductibles and co-pays substantially," said Lynn Statham, vice president of AFA-CWA Council 12. She had worked at Eastern Airlines for four years and left before the 1989 strike, but walked the picket line with the Eastern workers.

The flight attendants are also fighting company demands for fewer fixed days off and maintaining wage rates below what they are at American and Delta airlines.

Members of other unions joined the action, including mechanics, members of Teamsters Local 986, who are in their own contract fight with United.

"We're here to support as part of the labor movement," said AT&T worker Jason James, who came with other members of Communication Workers of America Local 9400. "We are joining the fight to let them know they're not alone."

— Deborah Liatos

Montreal Old Port workers launch strike for CA\$15 an hour

MONTREAL — Unionized workers at Montreal's Old Port tourist complex began a three-day strike May 27 demanding a \$15 an hour minimum wage. The members of the Union of Montreal Old Port Workers voted by 80 percent May 19 to reject the employer's final offer and authorize a strike.

"About 200 of our members are on strike today," union President Konrad Lamour told a rally and press conference of strikers and supporters kicking off the action. "Our fight is not just for ourselves but for all those who can't survive on what they are earning."

The Old Port contract with the union expired in March. Previous negotiations have always ended with the impoverishment of the workers, Lamour told the *Militant* before the strike. More than half are paid less than CA\$15 an hour (about US\$11.50). "We are demanding a catch-up," he said.

Since they work under the federal labor code, the workers are not protected by a Quebec law restricting the use of strikebreakers.

Bosses have divided the workers into classes of permanent, regular and temporary employment. Only the 100 or so permanent workers have any sort of job security and their working conditions are "a little less bad," said Lamour.

— Guillaume Imbeault and John Steele

Day of Solidarity with Fight for Puerto Rican Independence

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—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



June 14, 1991

Columns of troops from rebel organizations entered the capital city of Addis Ababa May 28, putting an end to the government that had ruled Ethiopia since the 1974 overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie.

Earlier in the week, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front won control of all of Eritrea, the first time since their guerilla struggle for independence began in the 1960s. The Oromo Liberation Front, which is demanding a referendum on independence for the southern part of the country, also participated in the overthrow.

Recognizing that the army had disintegrated under the impact of the insurgents' advance, Washington shifted its earlier call for a cease-fire and instead tried to maintain some credibility by "inviting" the rebel forces to take control.



June 13, 1966

NEW YORK — Juan Mari Bras, leader of the Movement for Puerto Rican Independence, and a lawyer, was in the city recently to represent a group of Puerto Rican workers. While here, he spoke about the struggle in Puerto Rico against the war in Vietnam.

Mari Bras described the growing sentiment against the war among pro-independence youth. Recently, they held a seminar attended by over 100 delegates to learn more about the origins of the war and about Vietnam. The youth intend to use such information in their island-wide campaign to inform the people of Puerto Rico about the true nature of the war.

The seminar also discussed the draft law which obliges Puerto Rican youth to serve in the army of the colonial power which refuses them independence.



June 14, 1941

Local 302, Cafeteria Employees Union of New York, the second largest local of the Hotel, Restaurant and Bartenders International Union, prepared to use its manpower of 10,000 workers this week for a general strike in the industry. Monday night, June 9, at a membership meeting of over 4,000, the workers threw back insultingly meager offers of the employers with a ringing challenge.

The reasonable demands of the union had been stalled off by the bosses since the expiration of contracts on April 30, and the membership was determined not to repeat another half year stalling, as happened in 1939. A minimum two dollar general wage increase would still not allow the workers to meet the tremendous rise in rents, food and clothing.

‘A voice for the excluded’

Cuban youth paper interviews Socialist Workers Party candidate

The following interview appeared in the May 8 issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, the newspaper of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, under the headline, “Alyson Kennedy: A Voice for the Excluded.” Translation is by the Militant.



Most people think that only two parties participate in the U.S. presidential elections, the Democrats and Republicans. But others persist in raising a different class viewpoint, despite the system rendering them invisible.

BY JUANA CARRASCO MARTÍN

The U.S. election campaign is reaching its climax with the two major parties selecting their candidates. Hidden behind this show is a system that defends a single set of interests — those of big capital, the world of finance, the arms industry, the polluters of the earth’s climate, the exploiters of workers in [their] backyard and of the wealth and goods produced by professionals, workers, and peasants in much of the world, where the imperialist multinationals plunder and intervene.

However, though buried by the media, which has its own part to play in this show, there are small parties — often persecuted, sidelined, and excluded — that bring to the streets and, when possible, into the election booths, the real interests of working people.

A small woman with an easy smile, plainspoken, convincing, and firm, she presents the other side, though not of the same coin. On the contrary, she exposes and condemns what is actually taking place across the United States in 2016.

Alyson Kennedy is the Socialist

Workers Party candidate for president. She is joined by Osborne Hart on the SWP’s presidential ticket, which was announced February 12.

On May 1, Kennedy marched with the Cuban people in the International Workers Day Parade along Havana’s Avenida Paseo. She participated as part of a delegation of mothers and relatives of victims of police violence in the United States. She took advantage of an exchange with *Juventud Rebelde* to speak about what’s taking place in her country and her impressions of her first trip to Cuba.

You are the Socialist Workers Party candidate in the November 8 general elections, but all we hear about are the Republican and Democratic Party campaigns.

“The main thing the U.S. elections are revealing is the deep crisis within the bourgeois Republican and Democratic political parties. We have seen how candidates Donald Trump (Republican) and Bernie Sanders (Democrat) are receiving substantial support because they present themselves as being different from the other politicians. They portray themselves as if they aren’t part of the political machine. That’s why they are getting a lot of support, including from many workers who take part in their rallies.

“There are reasons for this. We must remember the deep worldwide economic crisis and how it is felt in the United States as well. The government says there is an economic recovery, but unemployment remains high. It’s higher than we’ve seen in years, because there are workers who aren’t included in the statistics.

“While campaigning I’ve met workers who’ve told me they haven’t found jobs since the 2008 economic downturn,” says Alyson, who has supported the strike this year by 40,000 workers at Verizon, the telecommunications company, the largest work stoppage in the United States in many years. The workers have had no contract since August, while Verizon is seeking to cut pensions and to allow the outsourcing of work. Verizon says it has trained thousands of nonunion employees to replace striking workers.

Kennedy says that for all U.S. workers, “wages continue to stagnate. Forty percent of the U.S. workforce earn less than \$15 an hour, which is not enough for a family to live on. This has led many workers to begin to question what is happening in the United States and to have less confidence in what the Democratic and Republican parties are doing in relation to this crisis.”

But these candidates talk about change.

“That is what’s behind the support Trump and Sanders are receiving. But no matter who is elected, there will be no changes that improve the situation of working people.

“All significant change in the United States — such as the fight against racial segregation, the struggle for unionization in the 1930s, the anti-Vietnam War struggle, the struggles of women for the right to abortion — has been won through demonstrations in the streets. That’s also true for the struggles we’ve seen recently, like the fight for unions, to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and against police violence.”

This resolute statement by the political activist is based on her long personal experience as a worker and union organizer. Alyson Kennedy, who joined the socialist movement in 1973, was a coal miner in Alabama, Colorado, Utah, and West Virginia. She joined the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in 1981 and was one of the leaders of a strike in Utah in 2004.

She was part of the first wave of women who entered the mines in the United States in order to break down divisions based on sex and to strengthen working-class solidarity. She joined the Coal Employment Project, an organization that defended the right of women to work in the mines and fought against workplace harassment.

She’s familiar with the struggles carried out by the UMWA in the 1960s and 1970s for job safety. Those strikes, which shook the country, won the right to refuse to work under unsafe conditions. She recognizes, however, that the movement has been eroded and that today the majority of U.S. mines don’t have unions. This is what Alyson talks to U.S. workers about.

She doesn’t do so from the outside or from a theoretical view of the class struggle. Today Alyson Kennedy works in Chicago at a Walmart, the largest



Orlando Perera/ICAP

Alyson Kennedy speaks to press in Havana May 5.

chain of retail stores in the world, condemned in many countries for the exploitative conditions it imposes on its workers and employees.

“That’s why I, as a candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, and my running mate Osborne Hart, as well as our other candidates for Senate and other offices, get a good reception from workers, because they are open to discussing a revolutionary perspective,” she says.

“Workers know they’re being exploited, they know what’s happening in the country and in the world,” says Alyson Kennedy, who emphasizes that one of the issues that this campaign addresses is opposition to U.S. involvement in the Mideast. “And many workers are also willing to hear about the Cuban revolution,” she adds.

You mentioned Cuba. What brings you to our country, at the time of the May Day celebration?

“I’ve come to Cuba as part of a delegation of working-class women who are fighting against police brutality, of which there are many victims in the city where I live, Chicago.

“This is my first visit to Cuba, although I know a good deal about the island. Through the party’s activity we educate about Cuba and worked for years for the release of the Cuban Five, and we educate about the need to end the embargo (blockade).

“In spite of the short time I’ve been here, I’ve been able to see the country first hand, and this will greatly help me explain to workers there why Cuba is an example for us. If Cuba was able to make a revolution and create a society that addresses workers’ needs, we can do it in the United States, too,” the socialist leader emphasizes.

She explains why she thinks this is clearly and certainly possible: “We have a long history of struggle in the United States, as well. Workers in the United States must become aware of what they’ve won through struggle. We have to realize the power we have and our own worth.”

She concludes her words for the readers of *Juventud Rebelde* with a pledge:

“I want you to know that when we return we’ll redouble our efforts in the fight against the blockade and for the return of the territory occupied in Guantánamo, which belongs to Cuba. Having been here helps us realize why it’s important to continue to fight for our rights.”

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THE CUBAN FIVE talk about their lives within the US working class



NEW

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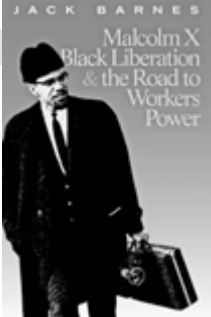
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Debate on UK referendum

Continued from front page

especially given their precarious prospects for profitable production and trade. Industrial output in the U.K. is in recession and labor productivity lags behind its competitors.

The capitalist magnates point out that the EU is the biggest trading area in the world. Through membership, British companies can sell goods across the continent paying fewer tariffs, and the U.K. serves as a platform for companies from the United States and elsewhere seeking to trade within the EU. As a result, the U.K. now has one of the highest levels of foreign direct investment in the world. EU membership, the bosses argue, offsets Britain's decline as a world power, allowing London to "punch above its weight."

London has already secured an opt-out from the "ever closer union" in the EU's founding charter, and from a number of other EU regulations, and the British rulers have maintained their own currency, the pound, instead of joining the EU's eurozone. The government-led Remain campaign argues this means the U.K. has the best of both worlds.

The Remain campaign has the backing of the Labour Party, Scottish National Party and Liberal Democrats, as well as most of the trade union officialdom, the Confederation of British Industry, Washington, the main EU governments and international financial institutions.

Workers face growing social crisis

Despite this lineup of bourgeois political forces and the pro-capitalist union officialdom, the outcome of the vote hangs in the balance.

Millions of workers will vote to leave, frustrated with years of declining living standards and growing social crisis, angered by the bloated EU bureaucracy and distrustful of the traditional parties of government. This distrust is rein-

forced by events such as U.S. President Barack Obama's April visit to Britain, during which he declared that if London leaves the EU, the "U.K. is going to be in the back of the queue" on trade deals with Washington.

The "Brexit" debate is driving a political crisis within the Conservative Party. Nearly 40 percent of Tory members of Parliament have declared support for the "Leave" campaign. Some are calling for the resignation of the party leader, Prime Minister David Cameron, whatever the outcome of the referendum.

The other major party campaigning for a British exit is the populist UK Independence Party, which argues that London needs to defend "British sovereignty," including imposing greater restrictions on immigration from other European countries. They say further expansion of the EU will lead to increased immigration, especially from Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sought to take advantage of the surge of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa to press Ankara's long-held objective of EU membership. For more than two decades, member governments across the continent have found one excuse after another to block entry of the EU's first "non-European" member. In return for visa free travel into the EU for Turkish citizens, the Turkish government is now taking measures to slow down Europe-bound refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

Remain and Leave campaigners have traded exaggerated threats of the dangers of their opponents' stand. Cameron claims that leaving the EU will result in imminent economic crisis and war. Fellow Tory MP Boris Johnson argues that the EU "is an attempt to do ... by different methods" what Napoleon and Hitler had attempted, to "recreate the dream of

Thousands in Puerto Rico say 'Free Oscar López'



Militant/Ron Richards

Thousands marched in San Juan, Puerto Rico, above, May 29 to demand the release of Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera. The action marked the 35th anniversary of his imprisonment in the U.S.

López "has become a symbol of resistance and decolonization," said Eduardo Villanueva Muñoz, spokesperson for the Human Rights Committee of Puerto Rico, one of the organizers. López was framed up on charges of "seditious conspiracy" for his activities in support of independence for Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony.

"We don't want this board, we want to be free," was one of the chants during the march, a reference to a plan by Washington to impose an appointed board to take control of the country's financial decisions.

In New York, the group 35 Women for Oscar held a spirited action the same day. A national action will take place there June 20 outside the United Nations during its annual hearings on the decolonization of Puerto Rico. Protests will also be held at U.S. embassies in at least 35 countries that day to demand freedom for López.

—MARK THOMPSON

the Roman Empire."

But support for leaving has little to do with these arguments. "I'll be voting leave," Kevin Gallagher, a factory worker from Dagenham in East London, told the *Militant*. "The money that is spent on the EU should be spent on things we need like hospitals. Whatever the outcome of the vote the government

will still be going after workers rights," he added. Other workers told this reporter they would vote to stay in, despite disliking the EU, because they are uncertain what a British exit would mean for living standards.

The referendum debate is sharpening factional tension within the Labour Party. The party's recently elected London mayor Sadiq Khan has joined with Cameron to campaign for Remain. While party leader Jeremy Corbyn has demurred sharing a platform with the Conservative leader, he argues that EU regulations protect workers and are the road to "a real social Europe."

Leaving would lead to a "bonfire of rights," says Corbyn. This rings hollow in light of the assault on workers underway in France today led by the Socialist Party government of Francois Hollande (see article on page 4).

Similar developments are fueling political crisis across the continent. The two dominant capitalist powers, the rulers in Germany and France, push for greater European political integration as they squeeze weaker countries such as Greece, with devastating consequences for working people and much of the middle classes. Meanwhile from Germany to France to Italy to Austria, anti-EU parties and movements are growing. Attitudes to the EU differ between and within the traditional capitalist and bourgeois labor parties.

Despite "stimulus" measures, growth remains sluggish across the eurozone. While unemployment averages over 10 percent, there are vast regional differences. Germany's official unemployment rate is 4.5 percent; Greece's stands at a quarter of the population.

Whatever the outcome of the UK referendum, further fracturing pressures will dominate the EU.

Communist League: Vote Leave, oppose UK imperialism

The following statement was issued by Jonathan Silberman for the Communist League in the United Kingdom.

The Communist League in the U.K. is calling for a vote against EU membership, while opposing the British nationalist demagoguery of both the Remain and Leave campaigns.

Britain's capitalist rulers have used membership in the European Union and its predecessors from the outset to strengthen their hand in pressing down wages and job conditions of the working class at home and weakening our unions. They rely on the EU to bolster their imperialist interests against oppressed peoples of the semicolonial world, and to boost British capital's position in fighting for profitable markets against imperialist rivals in Europe, North America, and the Pacific.

Working people in other EU member states — our brothers and sisters — from Germany to Greece, face the same types of attacks from the exploiting classes and governments in those countries.

In opposing the capitalist rulers in the U.K. and voting to leave the EU, the Communist League rejects the reactionary "British sovereignty" banner of the Leave campaigns of Boris Johnson and



Militant/Paul Davies

Jonathan Silberman, at right, on London tube (subway) drivers picket March 23. Independent working-class political action is needed against UK capitalist rulers, says Communist League.

UKIP, which appeal to working people to subordinate ourselves to the rule of British capitalists.

Workers have no interest in supporting Cameron's deal, which serves the interests of the U.K.'s ruling families. Backing pro-EU campaigners such as Corbyn, who falsely claim that a "social Europe" benefits workers, deals a blow to the working class and unions.

Independent working-class political action means organizing solidarity with union and other workers' struggles here

and around the world. It means fighting for immediate demands to unite and defend workers from efforts by the employers and government to make workers pay for the devastating impact of today's global capitalist depression and serve as cannon fodder in London's wars and military interventions.

Join the Communist League in advancing a course to forge a party that will mobilize working people in revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government.

Trotsky's 1939 call for 'united, independent Soviet Ukraine'

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-1939) is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. This excerpt is from "The Ukrainian Question," written April 22, 1939, as World War II was approaching. At that time, Ukraine was divided between the Soviet Union and Poland. Trotsky, a leader of the Bolshevik-led 1917 Russian Revolution, championed V.I. Lenin's communist course, including on the national question, against the counterrevolution by the privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet Union headed by Joseph Stalin. The Stalinist regime's "massacre of national hopes" in Soviet Ukraine that Trotsky refers to includes the creation of an artificial famine in 1932-33 in which millions perished. Copyright © 1974 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The Bolshevik Party, not without difficulty and only gradually under the constant pressure of Lenin, was able to acquire a correct approach to the Ukrainian question. The right to self-determination, that is, to separation, was extended by Lenin equally to the Poles and to the Ukrainians. He did not recognize aristocratic nations. Every inclination to evade or



Ukrainian writers, painters and composers, 1923 in Kiev. Art and culture flourished in Ukraine after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, under the leadership of Lenin, who backed self-determination for nations oppressed under Czarist rule. Stalinist bureaucracy reversed this course.

postpone the problem of an oppressed nationality he regarded as a manifestation of Great Russian chauvinism.

After the conquest of power, a serious struggle took place in the party over the solving of the numerous national problems inherited from old czarist Russia. In his capacity as people's commissar of nationalities, Stalin invariably represented the most centralist and bureaucratic tendency. This evinced itself especially on the question of Georgia and on the question of the Ukraine. The correspondence dealing with these matters has remained unpublished to this day. We hope to publish a section of it — the very small section which is at our disposal. Every line of Lenin's letters and proposals vibrates with an urge to accede as far as possible to those nationalities that have been oppressed in the past. In the proposals and declarations of Stalin, on the contrary, the tendency toward bureaucratic centralism was invariably pronounced. In order to guarantee "administrative needs," i.e., the interests of the bureaucracy, the most legitimate claims of the oppressed nationalities were declared a manifestation of petty-bourgeois nationalism. All these symptoms could be observed as early as 1922-23. Since that time they have developed monstrously and have led to outright strangulation of any kind of independent national development of the peoples of the USSR.

In the conception of the old Bol-

shevik Party, Soviet Ukraine was destined to become a powerful axis around which the other sections of the Ukrainian people would unite. It is indisputable that in the first period of its existence Soviet Ukraine exerted a mighty attractive force, in national respects as well, and aroused to struggle the workers, peasants, and revolutionary intelligentsia of Western Ukraine enslaved by Poland. But during the years of Thermidorean reaction, the position of Soviet Ukraine and together with it the posing of the Ukrainian question as a whole changed sharply. The more profound the hopes aroused, the keener was the disillusionment.

The bureaucracy strangled and plundered the people within Great Russia, too. But in the Ukraine matters were further complicated by the massacre of national hopes. Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions, and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine in the struggle against the powerful, deeply rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence. To the totalitarian bureaucracy, Soviet Ukraine became an administrative division of an economic unit and a military base of the USSR. To be sure, the Stalin bureaucracy erects statues to [Ukrainian poet Taras] Shevchenko but only in order more thoroughly to crush the Ukrainian people under their weight and to force it to chant paeans in the

language of the Kobzar [the Bard, a nickname for Shevchenko] to the rapist clique in the Kremlin. ...

The Fourth International must clearly understand the enormous importance of the Ukrainian question in the fate not only of Southeastern and Eastern Europe but also of Europe as a whole. We are dealing with a people that has proved its viability, that is numerically equal to the population of France and occupies an exceptionally rich territory, which, moreover, is of the highest strategic importance. The question of the fate of the Ukraine has been posed in its full scope. A clear and definite slogan is necessary that corresponds to the new situation. In my opinion there can be at the present time only one such slogan: *A united, free, and independent workers' and peasants' Soviet Ukraine.* ...

Insofar as the issue depends upon the military strength of the imperialist states, the victory of one grouping or another can signify only a new dismemberment and a still more brutal subjugation of the Ukrainian people. The program of independence for the Ukraine in the epoch of imperialism is directly and indissolubly bound up with the program of the proletarian revolution. It would be criminal to entertain any illusions on this score.

But the independence of a United Ukraine would mean the separation of Soviet Ukraine from the USSR, the "friends" of the Kremlin will exclaim in chorus. What is so terrible about that? — we reply. The fervid worship of state boundaries is alien to us. We do not hold the position of a "united and indivisible" whole. After all, even the constitution of the USSR acknowledges the right of its component federated peoples to self-determination, that is, to separation. Thus, not even the incumbent Kremlin oligarchy dares to deny this principle. To be sure it remains only on paper. The slightest attempt to raise the question of an independent Ukraine openly would mean immediate execution on the charge of treason. But it is precisely this despicable equivocation, it is precisely this ruthless hounding of all free national thought, that has led the toiling masses of the Ukraine, to an even greater degree than the masses of Great Russia, to look upon the rule of the Kremlin as monstrously oppressive.

June

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The Militant June 13, 2016

Demand US gov't destroy its nukes!

President Barack Obama spoke in Hiroshima last week, where Washington first unleashed the atomic bomb in August 1945. That destruction should spark a “moral revolution,” he intoned, with the goal, one day, to “eliminate the existence of nuclear weapons.” His actions as chief executive officer of U.S. imperialism, however, expose the hollowness of his words.

It is in the interests of the working class to eliminate all nukes. For workers in the United States, that starts with demanding the capitalist rulers in Washington unilaterally dismantle their deadly arsenal!

Together Washington and Moscow hold 90 percent of the world’s thousands of nuclear weapons, enough to destroy humanity many times over, and both are modernizing their arsenals. Under the Obama administration, the U.S. government has reduced the size of its nuclear stockpile at a slower pace than under any of his three predecessors. And Washington is pushing ahead with the deployment of an anti-missile system along the periphery of the former Soviet Union, aimed at giving the U.S. rulers a strategic advantage against Moscow. It is also advancing its “pivot” to Asia, aimed at holding back Beijing’s challenge to U.S. supremacy.

The likelihood is growing, not diminishing, that nuclear weapons will be used in conflicts around the world as rival governments compete for markets in the midst of the deepening worldwide capitalist economic crisis. When the Stalinist regime imploded in the Soviet Union at the start of the 1990s, the U.S. rulers thought they had won the Cold War, and would dominate the world unopposed. Today that illusion is crumbling, from the coming apart of the imperialist order in the Middle East to Washington’s growing economic and military rivalry with Beijing in the Pacific.

A speech by Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in November 2005 gives the communist position. “We have never considered producing nuclear weapons because we don’t need them,” Castro said. “It would mean joining the game of nuclear confrontation.

“We have a different type of nuclear weapon: it’s our ideas,” he said. “Our nuclear weapon is the invincible power of moral weapons.”

The capitalist rulers won’t get rid of nuclear weapons, even though they risk their own destruction. That alone is a powerful reason why working people need to organize to take power out of their hands on the road to building a socialist world.

Verizon strike won solidarity, tentative deal set

Continued from front page

posals by Verizon to contract out more work; shut down call centers, moving them to other countries with substantially lower wages; cut pensions and increase health care costs.

On April 28, Verizon issued a “last, best, and final” offer and sent it to every striker, urging them to cross the picket lines. But the overwhelming majority of union members stayed strong. Verizon Chief Financial Officer Fran Shammo told stockholders April 21 that the strike was putting “pressure on earnings.” The Obama administration stepped in to press for a settlement.

According to a Communications Workers union summary, workers will get a 10.9 percent wage increase over the four-year contract. Current employees will keep their pensions. And the company will

hire 1,300 new call center workers during the contract term. The summary says that union officials agreed to “new health care costs for members.” For the first time some 70 retail workers at Verizon Wireless stores will be covered by the contract.

The union officials agreed to lift the contractual cap on overtime work for two weeks to deal with the backlog from the strike.

Many workers who spoke to the *Militant* said they are waiting to read the full agreement before deciding what they think. Workers will vote on the contract by June 17.

In a related development, negotiations continue for 15,000 AT&T West workers in California and Nevada. Their contract expired April 10. Some 1,700 members of CWA Local 9509 in San Diego ended a nearly one-week grievance strike May 26.

LETTERS

Free Oscar López

I have been transferred to a new prison and would like to start getting the *Militant* again. Keep up with your excellent work. Hopefully Mr. Oscar López will be free this year.

*A prisoner
Indiantown, Florida*

Easter Uprising

April 24 of this year was the 100th anniversary of the launching of the Easter Uprising in Ireland against British rule. It was launched in the middle of World War I and crushed only after five days of fighting.

In *New International* No. 1, available on the *Militant* website, in an article by Lenin titled *The Irish Rebellion of 1916*, he writes, “It is the misfortune of the Irish that they rose prematurely, before the European revolt of the proletariat had *had time* to mature. Capitalism is not so harmoniously built that the various sources of rebellion can immediately merge of their own accord, without reverse and defeats. On the other hand, the very fact that revolts do break out at different times, in different places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement; but it is only in

premature, individual, sporadic and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their leaders.”

I recommend this article and the counterposed article by Trotsky in the same issue of the magazine.

*Candace Wagner
New York City*

Nuclear disarmament

Thank you for saying that the USA should unilaterally disarm its nuclear weapons. I have been in agreement with that idea for a while. ICBMs and SSBNs do not keep our country safe, and the USA is not at war with Russia. The idea that the Russians are harboring some kind of unfulfilled desire to incinerate the USA is just silly. The Russians are just as afraid of

the USA as we are of them, and a nuclear war will start out of fear and not out of a latent desire to kill.

Could you please emphasize Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament?

*Jeffrey Erwin
Pewaukee, Wisconsin*

Books for prisoners

I was informed by a fellow prisoner that you distribute communist literature. I would be interested in any reading material you could provide me. I do not have a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Capital*, two books basic to any communist’s library.

*A prisoner
Monroe, Washington*

Editor’s note: Pathfinder Press offers books and pamphlets to prisoners at a 50 percent discount. For information, visit www.pathfinderpress.com or write Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 162767, Atlanta, GA 30321-2767.

The letters column is open for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Fear of recession

Continued from front page

output.

Declining industrial production and falling commodity prices are creating depression conditions worldwide that wreak havoc on the lives of workers and farmers. This is despite an official recovery since the 2008 financial crash in the U.S. that triggered the last global recession, the worst downturn since the 1930s Great Depression. The length of the economic slowdown since then is unprecedented.

In the U.S., where participation in the labor force has declined by 4 percent since 2008, layoffs are at their highest levels in seven years. Real median household income has fallen by 4 percent since 2007, while the number dependent on food stamps is the highest ever. For the first time since the mid-1980s, life expectancy has stalled for three consecutive years, while the gap in life expectancy between those on the highest incomes and those on the lowest has more than doubled to a difference of 14 years for men and 13 for women. Suicides have reached their highest peak in 30 years.

The G-7 leaders agreed that each would pursue existing policies to promote “global growth.” Abe had urged the adoption of stronger “fiscal stimulus” measures. But such policies, pursued by governments over recent years, have failed to spur economic revival. Japan itself has experienced stagnation for more than two decades.

Central banks, such as the U.S. Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank (ECB), and the Bank of Japan have kept interest rates at historically low levels, near zero. This has been accompanied by “quantitative easing” programs to purchase bonds and securities in order to pump money into the economy. The aim was to encourage spending and investment in production and hiring.

Negative interest rates depress economy

As growth failed to materialize, in 2014 the ECB and several central banks in Europe set negative interest rates. They were joined by the Bank of Japan in January. Under this policy, instead of paying interest on commercial bank reserves, the central bank charges for deposits. Because this is a tax, not easy credit, negative interest rates not only fail to stimulate production but have a depressive impact on the economy.

Taxing bank deposits could also lead to the hoarding of cash, one reason officials in the U.S. and Europe are moving to limit its use. The European Central Bank announced May 4 it will no longer print 500-euro notes, though the existing ones remain legal tender. In February former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers floated the idea of eliminating the \$100 bill.

The bosses don’t invest in expanding productive capacity and hire workers unless it is profitable to do so. But average industrial profit rates have been declining worldwide for decades.

Without a profitable expansion to invest in, the big capitalists sit on cash or speculate on stocks, bonds and derivatives where the rate of return is higher. This leads to mushrooming paper values that eventually burst — like that in the U.S. housing market, whose collapse helped trigger the 2008 crash.

For example, U.S. companies are taking on debt at record levels today, not to fund expansion, but to bolster shareholder returns and to fund takeover activity and speculation. According to Bank of America Merrill Lynch, companies have added nearly \$4 trillion of debt to their balance sheets since the start of 2008.

Total global debt — including governments, businesses and households — is rising and has already topped 2008 levels. U.S. credit card debt is on track to hit \$1 trillion, close to the all-time peak in 2008.

A deep-going recession could trim fictitious paper values, reduce inventories and remove unprofitable businesses — opening the way to a new cycle of growth. But the capitalists fear the consequences, which would be devastating for working people worldwide and risk unpredictable instability.

As the rulers seek to stave off a recession, and paper values and debt balloon with no corresponding growth in industrial capacity, the conditions are being prepared for a more catastrophic crisis. At the same time, the bosses continue their grinding offensive against workers’ jobs, wages, social benefits and rights.